

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended): A method for diagnosing, or identifying a predisposition to the development of, ~~age-related~~ a macular degeneration related disorder in a subject, comprising detecting in a biological sample from the subject the presence or abnormal levels of an autoantibody against, or an immune complex containing, ~~at least one macular degeneration-associated molecule~~ fibulin-3, beta-crystallin A2, beta-crystallin A3, beta-crystallin A4, beta-crystallin S, calrecticulin, 14-3-3 protein epsilon, or serotransferrin or an antigenic fragment thereof.

2. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein said macular degeneration related disorder is age-related macular degeneration or Malattia Leventinese associated molecule is selected from the group consisting of fibulin-1, fibulin-2, fibulin-3, fibulin-4, fibulin-5, fibulin-6, vitronectin, β -crystallin A2, β -crystallin A3, β -crystallin A4, β -crystallin S, glucose regulated protein 78 kD (GRP 78), calreticulin, 14-3-3 protein epsilon, complement 1q binding protein/hyaluronic acid binding protein, serotransferrin, albumin, keratin, pyruvate carboxylase, type IV collagen, elastin, C reactive protein (CRP), clusterin, metalloelastase, and villin 2.

3. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the detecting comprises contacting the biological sample with fibulin-3 ~~said at least one macular degeneration associated molecule or an antigenic fragment thereof~~, and detecting a specific interaction between the autoantibody and the fibulin-3 ~~at least one macular degeneration associated molecule or an antigenic fragment thereof~~.

4. (Currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the detecting comprises precipitating the immune complex from the biological sample contacting the biological sample with serotransferrin or an antigenic fragment thereof, and detecting a specific interaction between the autoantibody and the serotransferrin or antigenic fragment thereof.

5. (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising detecting a level of the autoantibody or immune complex in a control subject and comparing levels of the autoantibody or immune complex in the subject and the control subject.

6. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein said biological sample is a urine, eye fluid, blood plasma, serum, whole blood, or lymph fluid from the subject.

7. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 3 1, further comprising the step of precipitating a complex formed between the autoantibody and the at least one macular degeneration associated molecule fibulin-3, beta-crystallin A2, beta-crystallin A3, beta-crystallin A4, beta-crystallin S, calrecticulin, 14-3-3 protein epsilon, or serotransferrin or an antigenic fragment thereof before the detecting step.

8-14 (Cancelled).

15. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, further comprising examining the a subject with an ophthalmologic procedure after detecting the presence or abnormal levels of an autoantibody against fibulin-3, beta-crystallin A2, beta-crystallin A3, beta-crystallin A4, beta-crystallin S, calrecticulin, 14-3-3 protein epsilon, or serotransferrin in a biological sample from the subject.

16-20 (Cancelled).

21. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 20, wherein said biological sample is a urine, eye fluid, blood plasma, serum, lymph fluid, or whole blood from the subject.

22. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 4 20, wherein the detecting comprises contacting the biological sample with vitronectin serotransferrin or an antigenic fragment of vitronectin serotransferrin, and detecting a specific interaction between the autoantibody and vitronectin serotransferrin or a specific interaction between the autoantibody and the antigenic fragment of vitronectin serotransferrin.

23-32 (Cancelled).

33. (New): The method of claim 2 wherein the macular degeneration related disorder is age-related macular degeneration.

34. (New): The method of claim 2 wherein the macular degeneration related disorder is Malattia Leventinese.